

Office of Attorney General Terry Goddard



STATE OF ARIZONA
DEPARTMENT OF LAW
1275 W. WASHINGTON STREET
PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85007-2926
WWW.AZAG.GOV

ANDREA M. ESQUER
PRESS SECRETARY
PHONE: (602) 542-8019
CELL PHONE: (602) 725-2200

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Attorney General's Office Recovers \$500,000 for Military Personnel, Vets

(Phoenix, Ariz. – Nov. 7, 2007) With Veteran's Day approaching, Attorney General Terry Goddard noted that as we honor our nation's veterans, far too many are being victimized by scam artists. The Arizona Attorney General's Office has received a large number of consumer complaints from veterans and current members of the military. Fortunately, many have been successfully resolved.

During the past two years, the Attorney General's Office has received nearly 2,500 consumer complaints from U.S. veterans and current members of the armed services. The Office has recovered approximately \$500,000 for them.

Goddard cited the Office's Military and Veterans Hotline, started in 2005, as one reason for the high number of complaints and recoveries. The Hotline provides a direct link for veterans to contact the Attorney General's Office about consumer problems and possible fraud schemes targeting active duty personnel and veterans. The Hotline number is 1-866-879-5219.

"Our military personnel safeguard our freedom during war and peacetime. They definitely deserve protection from scams and ripoffs," Goddard said. "I am committed to helping Arizona's military personnel, their dependents and veterans whenever they are targets of abuse in the marketplace."

The past year's success stories include:

- An Arizona veteran from Peoria continued to receive billing statements from an alarm monitoring company after he had canceled his contract. The Attorney General's Consumer Information and Complaints Unit contacted the alarm company, which canceled the debt totaling \$2,981.
- An elderly out-of-state veteran was unable to obtain a refund from a company located in Arizona when he became unsatisfied with a business opportunity he had purchased. Upon intervention, he received a full refund of \$3,780.

- An elderly veteran from Scottsdale purchased a part for his heating unit that he believed was overpriced. Upon intervention, the consumer received a full refund of \$335.
- A current member of the military from Mississippi was contacted by phone by a debt management company in Arizona with an offer to reduce his credit card's interest rate. The debt consolidation company charged \$695 and mailed the paperwork to the serviceman. Upon review, the serviceman decided not to participate in the program, but the company refused to make any refund. Upon intervention, the man received a full refund,
- An elderly veteran from Oklahoma paid for auto parts he did not receive. Upon intervention, the consumer received the parts, with a value of \$1,579. The veteran sent a "thank you" letter to the office stating, "As a senior citizen it is difficult to know where to turn. We have visited your state many times as a tourist, and we are very proud to promote the many beautiful and wonderful services your state offers."
- An Arizona veteran from Taylor had his phone service plan changed without his authorization. Upon intervention by a Consumer Information and Complaints volunteer, the veteran received a full refund of \$177.

In addition to the toll-free hotline, the Attorney General's Office has a military and veterans page on its Web site (www.azag.gov) with information about consumer issues of special interest to armed services personnel and veterans.

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